

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910) 1928 EGI Albania EGI



PLATE II.—WOMEN OF SHALA

[Facing p. 25]

531
301

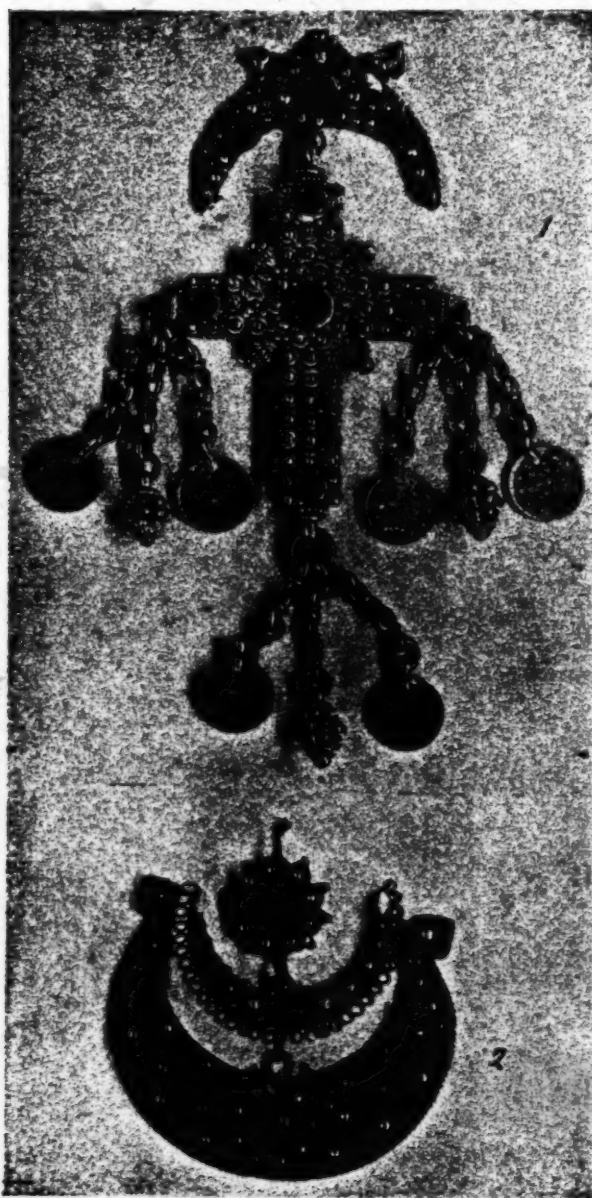


PLATE IV

- (1) CRESCENT AND CROSS ORNAMENT
- (2) CRESCENTS AND STAR

Worn by Catholic women of Malsia e Madhe.

NOTE.—Here the "Suns" at the ends of the cross are replaced by coins and a pendant resembling the cowry shape. Both cross and crescent are covered with rayed balls.

[Facing p. 121]

Tattooing and the Symbols Tattooed

visible mark has a strong effect on primitive and childish minds—006 witness national flags and school and college colours. The missionizing "popes" of the Orthodox Church had every reason to denounce a practice which thus "sealed" part of the population and made it turn a deaf ear to the attractions of Byzantium.

To this day the object of the Orthodox is to wipe all that belongs to Rome from the peninsula. I found the bitterest dislike, even among the educated classes; and among the peasants neither side would admit that the other was Christian. In early days the struggle must have been even cruder than to-day.

3. TATTOOING IN ALBANIA

We will trace these symbols farther south. In North Albania I³⁰¹ noticed that every Catholic woman among the five large tribes (Kastrati,⁵³¹ Shkreli, Hoti, Gruda, and Klementi) wore, if not too poor, a large silver filigree crescent and star stitched to the crown of her flat cap; or a similar design was embroidered and the "star" then larger. Asked why they wore a Turkish symbol, they crossed themselves and denied the charge indignantly, saying: "We wear it because we always do. It is not Turkish. We are good Catholics." They declared also it was¹⁷⁴ "very old"; and were quite correct. For the sun and moon symbol, as we have seen, was long pre-Turkish in the Balkans. I next found that³⁰⁴ the bulk of these tribes-folk, both men and women, are tattooed on⁵³¹ the back of the hand, the forearm, or the breast (seldom on all) with a cross; but never a plain cross. It has a crescent above and below it; or the arms terminate in small circles, as do those on Byzantine coins; or some in circles and some in crescents; or the cross is in the "sun-wheel" form. None of these people at all objected to showing the tattoos. I at once recognized in a simplified form the elements of the Bosnian designs. Most people said they did it because they were Catholics. Anxious to give a reason, one man said it was to ensure you Christian burial if you died abroad.

When I asked the Albanian tribesmen what was the meaning of the circle and crescent on the cross-arms, they said at once it was "Dielli"—the sun; and "Hana"—the moon. The cross was to show you were a Christian. What were the sun and moon for? The only reply was "per bukur" (for beauty). Often they laughed and gave none. Mgr. Ernesto Cozzy, then priest of Rechi and later Apostolic Delegate at Scutari, a Tyrolese whose knowledge of the mountain people was the result of years of sympathetic study, told me: "They have a number of³⁰⁴ curious pagan beliefs which they will not tell me. I have found that⁷⁷¹

Birth, Marriage, and Death

and a fringe is made of hair combed forward over the shaven area.⁵⁸⁵
The shaven temple makes the face look very wide.

In order to promote fertility, among the Dukagini it was not^[842]
uncommon to keep a pair of goats or sheep penned in the corner of
the living-room, even when it was at the top of a tall tower and some
twenty people lived in it.

On marriage, no kind of privacy is observed. Bride and bridegroom^[592]
take their place in the common apartment.

A colossal feast is usual at a wedding, and in the old days it might
last several days. A Djakovan friend told me that three oxen, fifteen
sheep, and God knows how many fowls had been eaten at his. At all
weddings any amount of firing takes place. The tribesman goes on
shooting so long as he has a cartridge left, for sheer joy of the "pop-
bang." One man I knew fired his whole stock of six hundred cartridges.

Weddings in the Towns.—In Scutari I was guest at two Catholic
weddings. The bridegroom saw the bride for the first time in church.
She was brought in closely veiled and unveiled only before the altar.
Weddings were always on a Monday or Saturday—usually a Monday.
"It would be most inconvenient to marry on any other day," was the
sole explanation findable.

This is what took place: The marriage had been arranged by the⁵⁸⁴
relatives on each side after long conferences. On Sunday afternoon
I was invited to the bridegroom's house to see the "gifts." No bride-⁵⁸³
price in money is paid. Four Scutari ladies in full dress sat on the floor⁵⁸⁵
at one end of the room and three men at the other, in charge of the
"gifts." These were always the same, and varied only in quality according
to the bridegroom's means. The "gifts" were a pair of boots, a pair
of slippers, and four boxes of scented soap (or perfume), which were
in charge of the men. The ladies watched over a large red silk hand-^[291]
kerchief, a pair of white cotton stockings (with pink suspenders sewn
on a card, a greatly admired novelty), a pair of scissors, needles and
pins in a casket, a distaff to make her a good housewife, and a handsome^[301]
necklace of large silver-gilt coins, set in filigree. This is called the
"dupa." It is worn by all married women, and is sometimes of gold
and very valuable. No doubt it represents the bride-price.

The boots had high gilt heels, yellow uppers, pink elastic sides,^[291]
and patent-leather toes, embroidered minutely with wreaths of flowers.
They were filled with sweetly scented flowers, that the bride's path on
earth might be sweet. We admired the gifts and awaited the arrival
of the relative who was to take them to the bride. He arrived with
several others; and they dragged from another room the bridegroom,
who resisted strongly because "he was so shy." Bride and bridegroom^[301]
have to assume a superhuman modesty.

Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans

- 585 The presents were tied up in two gaily coloured handkerchiefs. We went into the yard. The ladies joined hands and so did the men, and
- [533] stood in opposite rows singing alternate verses. The men asked if the bride was ready, and the ladies sang she was a lump of sugar. The youth who was acting as gift-carrier was then sprinkled with holy water by the mistress of the house, and went on his errand. All was over for that day. On Monday, at 9 a.m., we were called to the bridegroom's house.
- [534] A large party of male relatives and friends was gathered there, with a violin, tambouritza, and concertina. The bridegroom and his two witnesses sat in the yard on chairs. I went to the women's room. The display was gorgeous. On full-dress occasions the Scutarene Catholic ladies' dress touches the sublime. The exquisite fineness of the embroidered white silk veils, the skill with which they were draped; the coral and gold stitched "salman" which gleamed through the veil and stood in a peak over the forehead; the long tassels of seed-pearls or filigree gold that hung from the ears; the lavish display on neck and breast of great gold coins, and the great scarlet cloaks made up a scene of real magnificence. Each lady sat, a vast heap, on the floor, her huge purple-black "branaveks" (bloomers) billowing round her and the skirts of her scarlet stiffly embroidered "djuba" spreading like a peacock's tail behind her, with all the solemn dignity of an Eastern
- [262] idol. Coffee and piles of sweets circulated. An empty chair in the corner awaited the bride. Then an ox-cart creaked down the lane. The oxen were decked with marigolds. They brought the bride's coffer. We went to meet it. The women joined hands and sang a song of greeting, while with difficulty ten men carried the huge painted chest into the women's room. It contained all the bride's clothing; all her husband's under-clothing (she has to make him at least two dozen of everything); and all the house-linen (likewise her work). Two of the bridegroom's female relatives now went in a gaily decorated carriage to fetch the bride. The horses' heads were beflagged with the coloured handkerchiefs which play a large part in the life of the people. The ladies took with them a parasol for the bride and the scarlet cloak ("japangi"), which is the gift always of the bridegroom to the bride, and is worn by married women only. The bride was to be conveyed to the cathedral.
- [777] The bridegroom then entered the women's room to say farewell. He wept real tears and was dragged away weeping and resisting, the ladies sprinkling him with holy water as he left. After a long wait, punctuated with coffee, sweets, and rakia, a cry arose: "They are coming!" In the carriage were the two female bride-leaders, neither of whom may be the mother. A sister, aunt, or sister-in-law may take the duty. Between them sat the bride motionless, rigid, and closely
- [777] veiled; and opposite sat a little boy whose presence is necessary to

846 is spread, the national head-dress, ornamented with sequins, is placed on her head, and all her necklaces
 • [301] are hung round her neck, to receive the friends and acquaintances who now flock in to offer their congratulations. In some parts of Albania, and especially among the Moslems, it is customary to bring handsome presents to the infant. As each visitor did her best to outshine her neighbour in the value of her gift, this usage, among the Roman Catholic Miridites, became so ruinously expensive, that the ban of the Church was finally laid upon it. The visitors to the mother and baby consequently now bring with them only an egg, with which they rub the face of the new arrival, with the wish, "*Pashi bar*" (May it be always white!)—i.e., never have cause to blush for its actions.

852 When the baby is three days old the Fates are be-
 [776] lieved to arrive and decide what its fortune is to be. When two of the Weird Sisters have had their say, the third speaks, and her decision is final.¹ On the evening of this day, which is called the child's *Poganik*,² all the relatives of the family assemble uninvited, each bringing a small loaf, a girdle cake, and a wooden flask of wine. On these they feast and drink healths to the mother and child, the formula addressed to the latter being, "May he have strong legs!"
 [777] The women then set to work to make a large cake, all present touching, "for luck," the sieve used to sift the flour. As the dough is being kneaded coins are put into it, and when baked it is broken in pieces

¹ See "The Story of the Child," p. 319.

² The meaning of this term appears to have been lost by the Albanians.

ALBANIAN WOMEN

291 The native dress for women in Albania is as interesting as it is varied and picturesque. The dress of the Albanian ladies is rich and costly. The ladies of rank dress extravagantly with very full trousers of some bright silk—generally red—and are drawn tight at the ankles where they are further ornamented with a deep flounce of rich, handmade lace. Over this is worn the sleeveless vest and coat reaching to the knees, both, probably, of crimson velvet, gorgeously trimmed with gold lace and embroidered around the hem. The
302 Albanian lady of the higher class generally divides her hair into three strands, two of which are plaited around a red fez and the
301 other allowed to hang free. From this fez hangs a long, dark blue tassel which is full and decorated with small discs of pure gold or seed pearls.

301 The women of the Mirdite district wear a coat of thick, white woolen material, red trousers like those just mentioned, and a richly embroidered apron with fringe a half yard in length, but her head dress is simply a dark blue kerchief.

The poor peasant women dress in coarse

PEAKS OF SHALA

ooo trembling like a convalescent, but with fever gone and my lungs merely aching. I suggest the remedy for what it is worth.

[417] The byraktor received us at his gateway, for his house was surrounded by a high fence, almost a stockade, of woven branches. He was a tall, keen, quick man; bright, dark eyes and aquiline nose and thin, flexible lips, framed by the white turban's fold beneath his chin; a jacket of black sheep's wool; one massive jeweled silver chain on his breast. His swift smile was warm and beautiful, but one had a sense of reservations behind it; he welcomed the audacious Shala man without a quiver, and ushered us up the stone steps to the second floor of his house.

[342] There were several rooms, divided from the main large one by partitions of woven willow boughs, and from the large room a high, arched doorway in the stone wall led into farther regions.

592 At least forty men and women and children—five generations—were around the fire on the floor.¹ There was a little flurry of welcome and rearrangement, and in a moment we were in the center of the circle, sitting on thick mats of woven straw, while the byraktor made our coffee in the coals.

● [302] The women were beautifully dressed; I had not seen so much elegance of embroidery, of colored headkerchiefs, earrings, and chains of silver and gold coins. Their dark, beautifully modeled faces, large dark eyes, and heavy braids of black hair were set off by the profusion of rich
¹[House of war-chief of Sheshi—7 252] Analysis]

Sons of the Eagle

513 When all had done, mattresses and eiderdowns would be brought and spread out on the floor for the half-dozen guests of honour, while the others made themselves as comfortable as they might with their overcoats and jackets. It was still considered rather indecent to undress, but before the lights were snuffed out the prudent ones would gather their arms and effects about them against the dangers and confusions of a night attack. In cold weather the fire was kept alight till morning; in summer the room would often become intolerably stuffy from the accumulated animal warmth of a score of snoring sleepers.

512 The Albanians were not given to early rising, for their evening hours were late, and in the mountains the mornings were cold. They would get up between eight and nine o'clock and, by a generous convention, the younger guests were left sleeping till last. The mountaineers knew not breakfast; but in many houses the host would bring a cup of coffee or of hot, sweetened milk when he saw us wake. Ablutions were perfunctory, each man, or the host, pouring cold water from a ewer over his fellow's hands, with which the latter seldom did more than dab his eyes. Moustaches were *de rigueur*, though by exception Abas Kupi was clean-shaven; but only priests or bandits grew beards. Shaving, however, was most often a weekly affair and considered a sufficient occasion to warrant the valedictory greeting of "*Meschnett*" — an equivalent of "God bless you" — to the shaver. In these matters I conformed to the customs of the country, but Maclean and Smiley insisted on adhering to the standards of cleanliness of their distinguished cavalry regiments. Stripped to the waist and with razors flashing, they washed daily and thoroughly, to the great wonder of the mountaineers who crowded round to watch. Albanian sanitary arrangements were primitive but ingenious. The closet, which adjoined the guest room, projected, sometimes precariously, from the house over the courtyard below. It consisted of a hole in the floor, often of impracticably narrow circumference; and, underneath it, the thrifty Albanians were wont to keep their poultry, which gobbled up a strange diet with evident relish.

$\frac{1}{2}$ [i.e. eating — Analyst]

it was the offender's birthright to remain in the house, to eat at the common table, and to have his wife and children maintained out of the family purse. A striking illustration of this weakness of the communal system was to be seen in Shalë in the 1930's, when Mirash Nue's family included his wife, his elder son Pal, Pal's wife and four children, and his younger son Gjon. Since he, Mirash, was too old to work and Pal was a wastrel, Gjon alone ploughed to feed the household and fetched firewood to keep it warm. To get money for government taxes and his father's coffee and cigarettes, he worked for the priest in his spare time. He had been unable to earn enough to pay for a bride and at thirty years of age was still unmarried, a calamity in primitive Albanian eyes. Pal, not criminal, just lazy and selfish, and saved from beating by his father's advanced years and his own age, paid no attention to either his father's upbraidings or the barely concealed contempt of the neighbours and turned up unfailingly for the meals he had done nothing to provide.

The master received no money payments for his services but enjoyed certain privileges. His clothes were often newer and of better cloth than those of his subordinates; more silver chains crossed his breast, and more silver rings glittered on his fingers. He was entitled to have his own bedding and coffee utensils and to keep them until he died. If he chose to buy himself a riding horse, a watch, or arms richly inlaid with silver and bright stones, he might do so. His subordinates, though left to walk while he rode, to learn the time from the sun by day and from the crowing of a cock at night, and to content themselves with the plainest of rifles and revolvers, did not seem to resent his magnificence. He represented the family, and the worthier he appeared in externals as well as in mind and character, the greater the glory reflected on each of them.

Indoors the master sat in the place of honour in the sitting-room, the right-hand chimney corner as one looked from the fireplace towards the door. Though marked deference was usually shown to old people, he never gave up this place to his aged father or elder brother except in the districts of Shpat, Çermenikë and Shalë, where age took precedence over social position. The other men grouped themselves cross-legged in front of the fire, the future master facing it squarely, older men flanking him, and younger men sitting behind him. The youngest of all, who had to do such work as shutting the door, bringing firewood, and carrying in supper, sat next to the door; he was described as the serving man. When

Y Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans

776
777 Glass "turquoises" made the head-band yet more protective. Small
Y cocks are still made as heads of pins to fasten the head-dress to the
777 hair in the Herzegovina.

172 In the prehistoric graves at Glasinatz in Bosnia, tiny bronze amulets,
shaped like doves, have been found. In North Albania three wooden

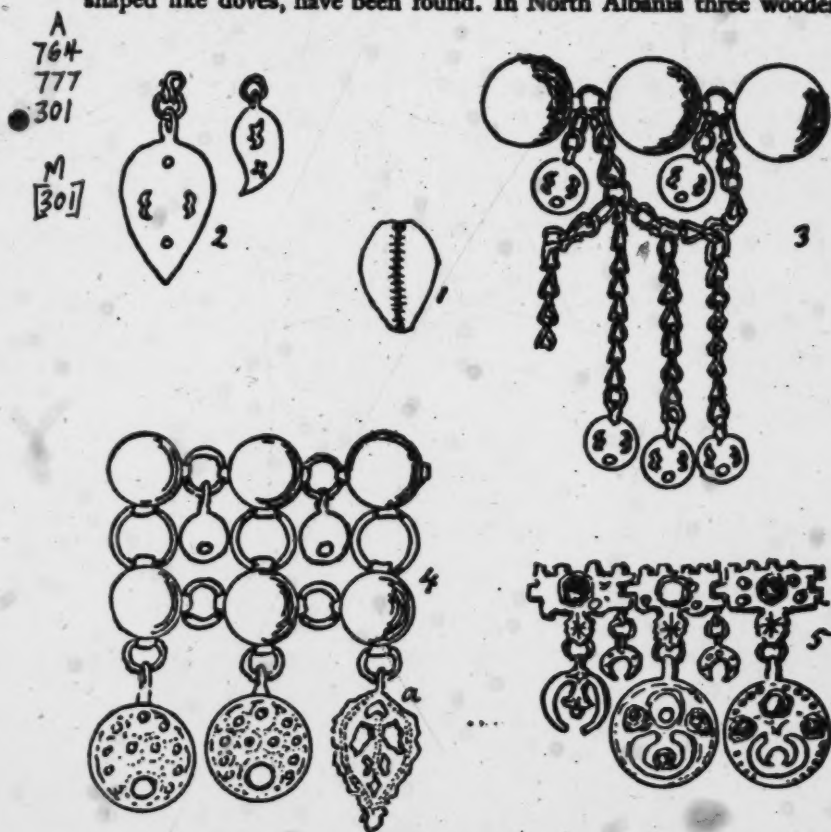


FIG. 19—SPECIMENS SHOWING EVOLUTION OF ORNAMENT FROM COWRY

1. Natural cowry. 2. Pendant common in North Albania. 3. Necklace from Kolashin, Montenegro (old specimen). 4. Breast ornament from Nikaj, North Albania (modern). 5. Old necklace, Scutari.

A
[53] doves perch on many a wooden grave-cross. Especially good examples
are at Boga. A dove forms part of the decorative design worked on
the scarlet cloak worn by the Catholic married women of Scutari, as
A does also the serpent. My repeated inquiries failed to find any explana-
142 tion of this dove. "It must be some old tale which we have forgotten,"
171 was the reply of the embroiderers. The Glasinatz amulets from ancient

Albania EG1 ●

Serbs EF6

Croats EF4

A

Y

12

THE DURHAM COLLECTION

294

386

A

Y

S

291

531

● 301

302

777

from madder; reddish brown from green walnuts (*Juglans regia*) and blue from copper sulphate.

Metallic decorations are also worn, and are almost always hand made by the men; large ornaments and belt clasps of silver or silvered brass are worn at the waist, silver coins and imitation coins are worn as a trimming to caps, and as necklaces and pendants to girdles. Ear-rings are also worn by some Slav peasants, especially Moslems. "The little ornament made of a small brass thimble and coloured beads was worn as a dangle at the end of the long pigtail. The pair of long plaits on either side of the face of the Bosnian woman in the frontispiece are ornamented with coins, tassels of beads and this thimble."

"Many of the objects worn on head-dresses are amulets to keep off the "evil eye" and include also such things as cowries and, in Bosnia, small mirrors." (M.E.D.).

CHAPTER III.

S

C

291

531

Women's Costume in the Central and Coastal Areas of Yugoslavia.

The main features of the costume worn (by all but the Moslem women) in the central and coastal areas of Yugoslavia are shown by the illustration of the Orthodox Bosnian woman (see Frontispiece).

In this area three cultures have influenced costume and its decoration, Central European culture which has travelled along the river valleys from the north, Mediterranean culture through Italian influence on the Dalmatian coast, and Balkan culture with its own Oriental tendencies. The married woman's costume consists of a long or medium length *skirt*, embroidered at the neck, front-opening and on the sleeves. The shorter type is similar in style to that shown on Plate IA, and the longer to that on Plate IXA, but without the embroidery at the bottom edge. A full, fairly long *skirt* of woollen or felted cloth is worn in the winter, and in summer may be exchanged for a linen skirt, sometimes closely pleated, with wide horizontal bands of cross-stitch or embroidery. A *girdle* of either folded linen with embroidery, or a tablet-woven belt such as is shown (Plate IVe) with its end hanging down in front, is worn around the waist and helps to keep up the heavy *apron* of tapestry weaving with its deep fringe (Plate III). A *short coat* of woollen cloth with embroidered decoration, often sleeveless, is added for outdoor wear, and in winter a longer coat with side gores replaces it. This is also often sleeveless.

In the coastal area and some other parts of old Bosnia and Herzegovina a *jelek*, or *zouave*, is worn, similar in shape but differing in colour from those in Plates X and XI, which are from the southern area.

S

302

301

291

Married women in many districts of Bosnia wear their hair in two plaits hanging down over either shoulder in front, and as a *head-dress* have a diagonally folded kerchief, generally cream or white in colour, with the back corner embroidered and a red ribbon along the edge. In the coastal district a fringe is also added to the head-dress (Plate IVa).

On the feet thick *woollen stockings* ("sharapa") are worn, and over these, handsomely decorated short socks, which act as slippers, in the house and are replaced by leather "opanke" for out-of-doors (Figure 9).

[Text continues on p. 14]